

RIBOCA1

PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Rīga
International
Biennial of
Contemporary
Art

Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More

June 2 – October 28, 2018

Curated by Katerina Gregos

FT
FINANCIAL TIMES

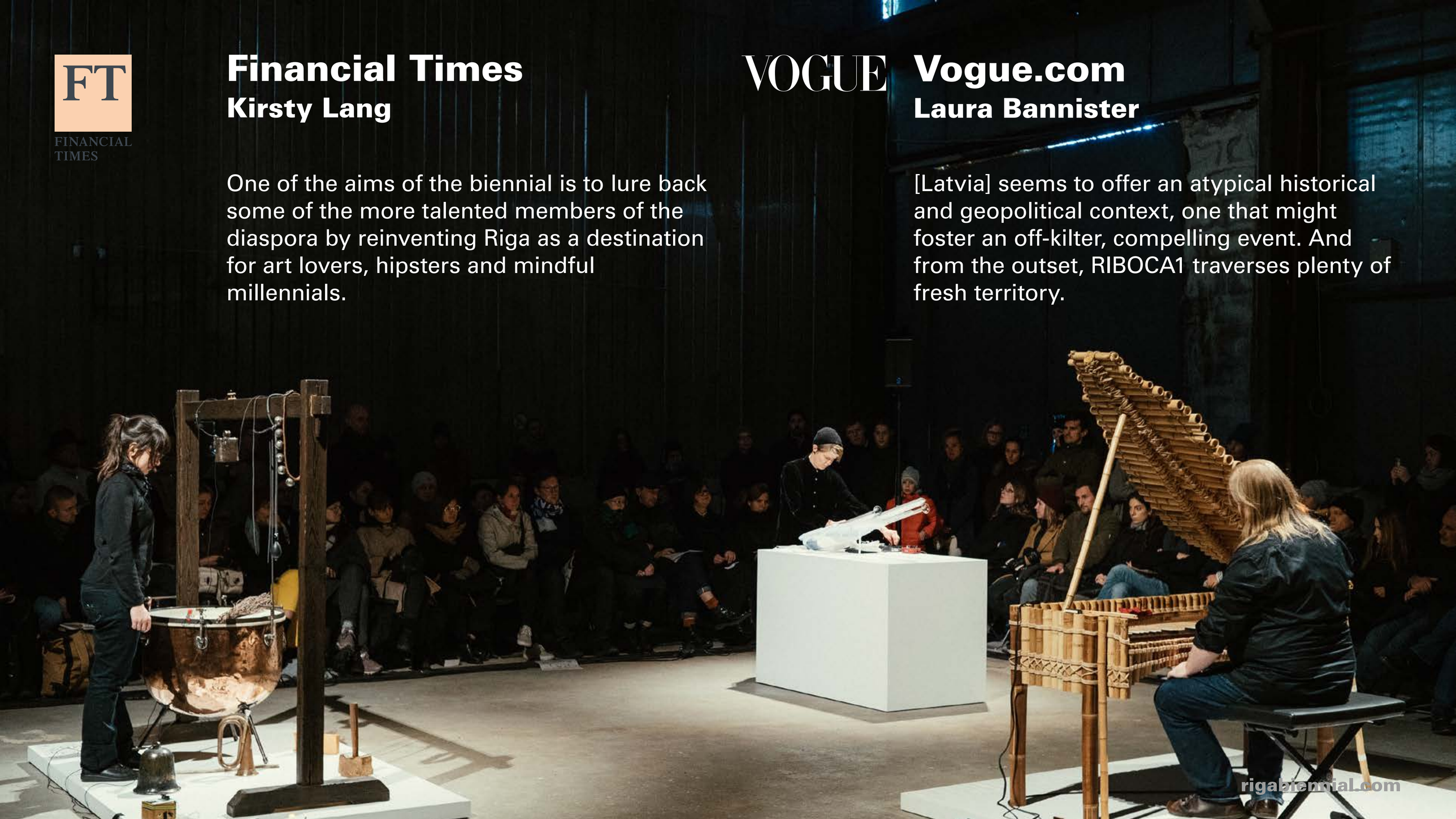
Financial Times
Kirsty Lang

One of the aims of the biennial is to lure back some of the more talented members of the diaspora by reinventing Riga as a destination for art lovers, hipsters and mindful millennials.

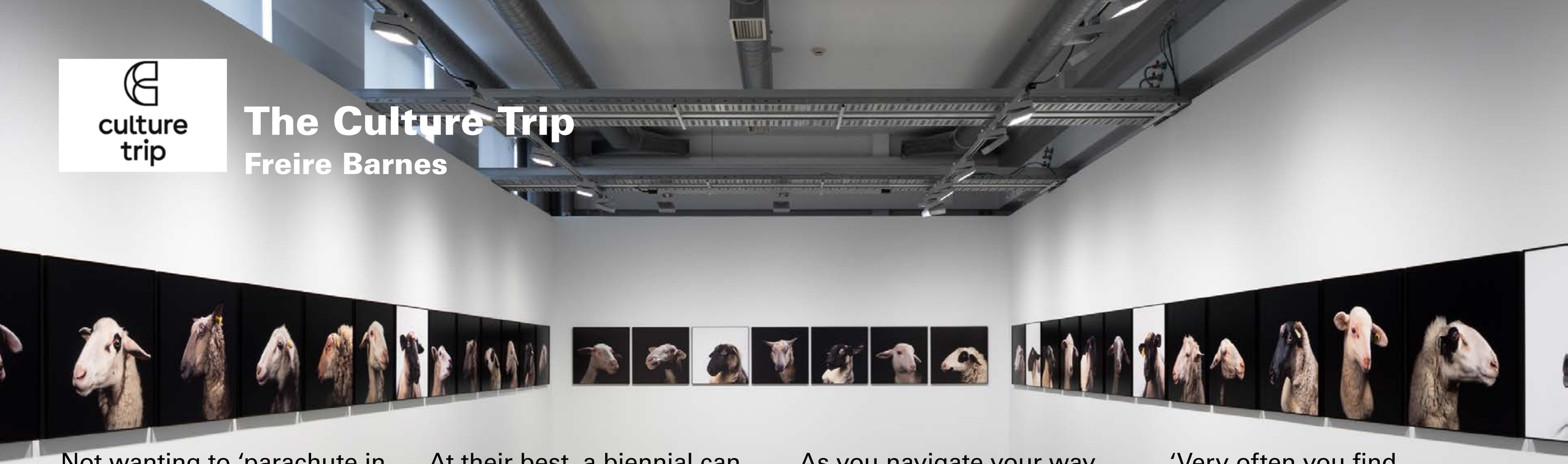
VOGUE

Vogue.com
Laura Bannister

[Latvia] seems to offer an atypical historical and geopolitical context, one that might foster an off-kilter, compelling event. And from the outset, RIBOCA1 traverses plenty of fresh territory.



rigabiennial.com



The Culture Trip

Freire Barnes

Not wanting to ‘parachute in and out’ as Gregos puts it, RIBOCA is all about creating a sustainable biennial model that prioritises artists and artistic production.

At their best, a biennial can bring together disparate ideas and a wide variety of artistic disciplines from different regions around the world to make a cohesive statement. And the first RIBOCA, titled Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More, certainly lives up to this premise.

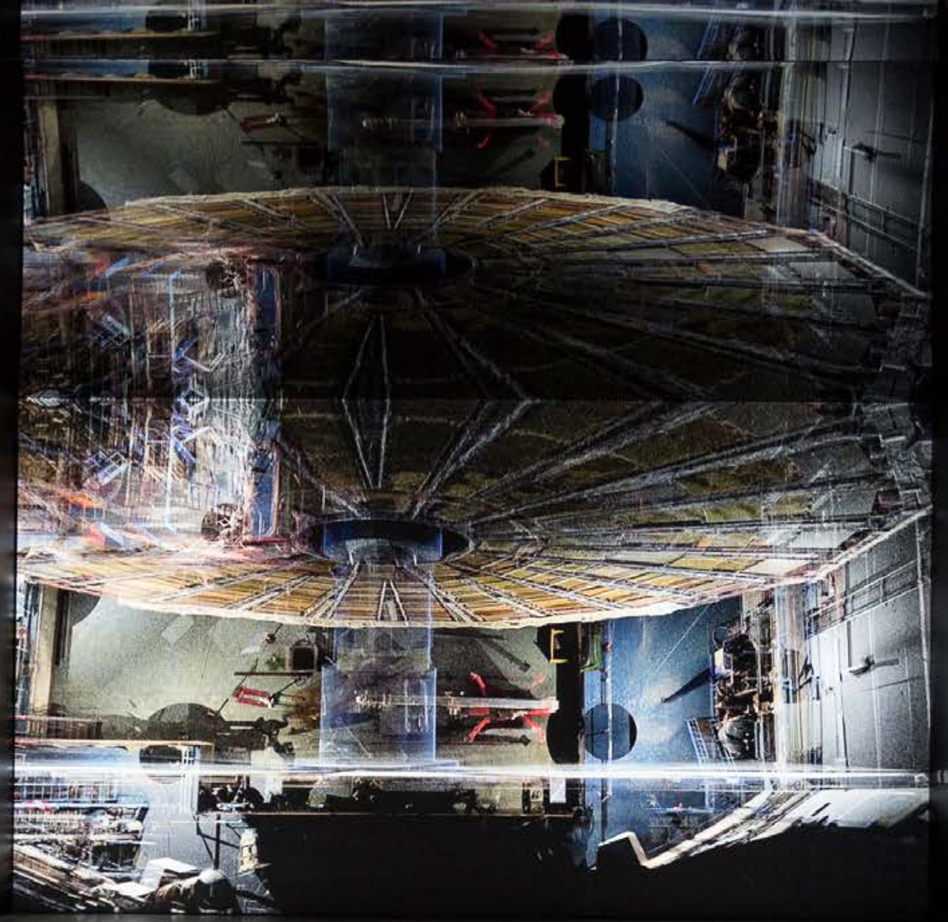
As you navigate your way around the remaining venues that include a former textile factory and Sporta2 square, a new district of Riga, it becomes ever more apparent that RIBOCA is an important moment in Latvia’s history…

‘Very often you find “politically engaged” work turns out to be extremely didactic, dry, and very often lacking in challenging or imaginative visual content, so I’m searching for artists who are able to bridge this very difficult gap between form and content,’ says Gregos. There is certainly nothing dry about her selection.

Artais-Art Contemporain

Katerina Gregos has extended the concerns of artists across an entire region and other countries in Europe, giving the opportunity to actors and institutions from different countries to exchange and cooperate. The biennale is therefore regional in tis geopolitical but global focus in its reflection and the opportunity given to artists to express their feelings and the way they imagine the future.”

To the delight of these discoveries, is added an organization to pale many biennials and triennials that flourish on continents, with a team of efficient mediators…”



Sylvie Fontaine

Starting from this local scene, Katerina Gregos has extended the concerns of artists across an entire region and other countries in Europe, giving the opportunity to actors and institutions from different countries to exchange and cooperate”.

FLASH ART

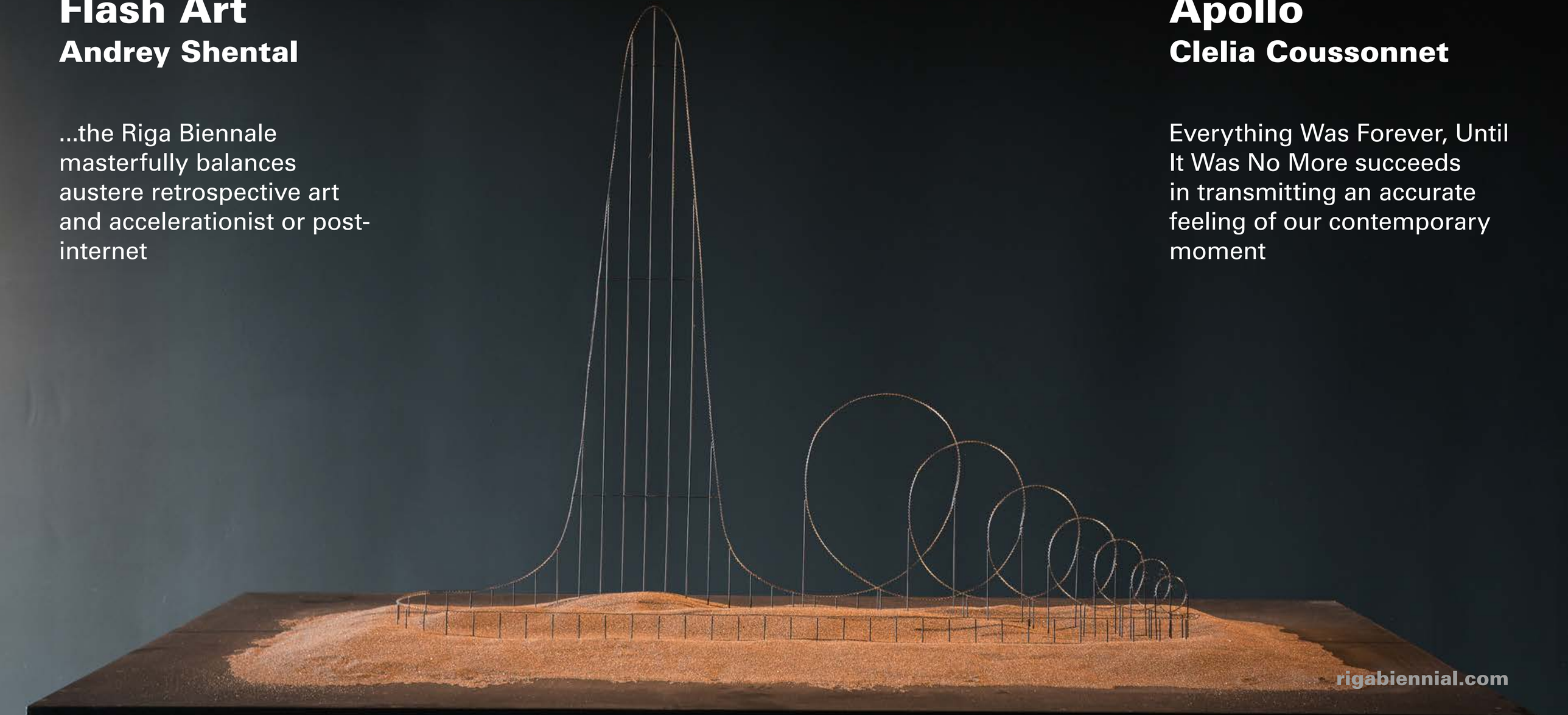
Flash Art
Andrey Shental

...the Riga Biennale masterfully balances austere retrospective art and accelerationist or post-internet

APOLLO
THE INTERNATIONAL ART MAGAZINE

Apollo
Clelia Coussonnet

Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More succeeds in transmitting an accurate feeling of our contemporary moment



rigabiennial.com



Art
MONTHLY

Art Monthly
Chris McCormack:

Hairpin bends in political history were ruminated on throughout ‘Everthing Was Forever, Until It Was No More’.

The Biennial which refreshingly presents only living artists’ works (not estates or archives), seeks to be more tangible, according to Gregos, and focuses on real change in the region — a compass pointing out from the Baltic areas — …

In what feels revealingly unexpected, all 90 or so participating artists were properly remunerated and looked after during their time in Riga…”

rigabiennial.com



art agenda

Art-Agenda
Tom Jeffreys

Labor of a more effective kind has taken place behind the scenes to ensure harmonious relations between RIBOCA and the city's existing art scene. The sensitivity with which Gregos responds to each venue further roots the biennial in

Riga's urban landscape.

taz

TAZ Magazine
Ingo Arend

A visit offers an experience similar to the recent Manifesta in Palermo...in Riga, art and city go hand in hand together where one can realize its transformational experiences step by step. A fascinating combination.

rigabiennial.com



Handelsblatt GLOBAL

Handelsblatt

Susanne Schreiber

Katerina Gregos' curatorial decisions show her deep understanding and sensitivity to this very interesting part of Europe,» praises Daniel Hug. The director of the art fair Art Cologne came to the opening.

While the catalogs of other large-scale exhibitions fill pages with superfluous «discourses» that nobody reads because the works to be described are finished too late, the Guide in Riga is available in time: as a pocket catalog in three languages, including the descriptions of the works of art and maps to find the hidden locations."

Chief curator Katerina Gregos, a sought-after freelance curator, has delivered her masterpiece in Riga.

It takes stamina for RIBOCA to discover so much art.

... Agniya Mirgorodskaya surely contributes to the establishment of a new biennale in Riga, increased the visibility of a vital Baltic art scene and situates the Baltics on the map for contemporary art.

rigabiennial.com

Frieze

Frieze

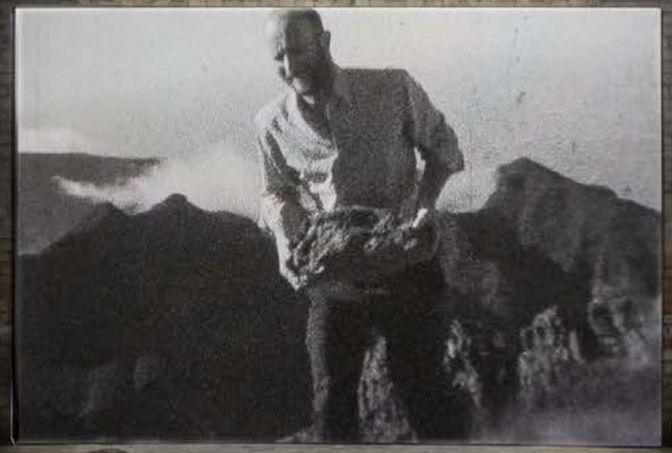
Mitch Speed

...the many funny, needling, absorptive works distributed across the show's eight venues. Ariana Loze's Impotence (2017) is a double projection wherein the artist delivers a poignantly neurotic monologue about the near-impossibility of living with purpose in the 21st century. Marina Pinsky's Second-Hand Time (2017–18), on the other hand, looks back. With charmingly perfunctory technique, the artist's photomontages combine archival images of a Soviet parachute squad with her own photographs of Riga, reflecting on the region's troubled history while humbly dodging sensationalism.

DER TAGESSPIEGEL

Tagesspiege

Van Werner Bloch



It should be more than an art spectacle: a permanent institution. It is led by one of the best curators that can currently be found in the art world. Katerina Gregos is known for her intelligent and politically charged exhibitions.

The Riga Biennial is an astonishingly wide-ranging, lively exhibition, with over a hundred artists from all over the world, including many Balts…The Biennale is not about mourning past Utopias, but bravely looking to the future.

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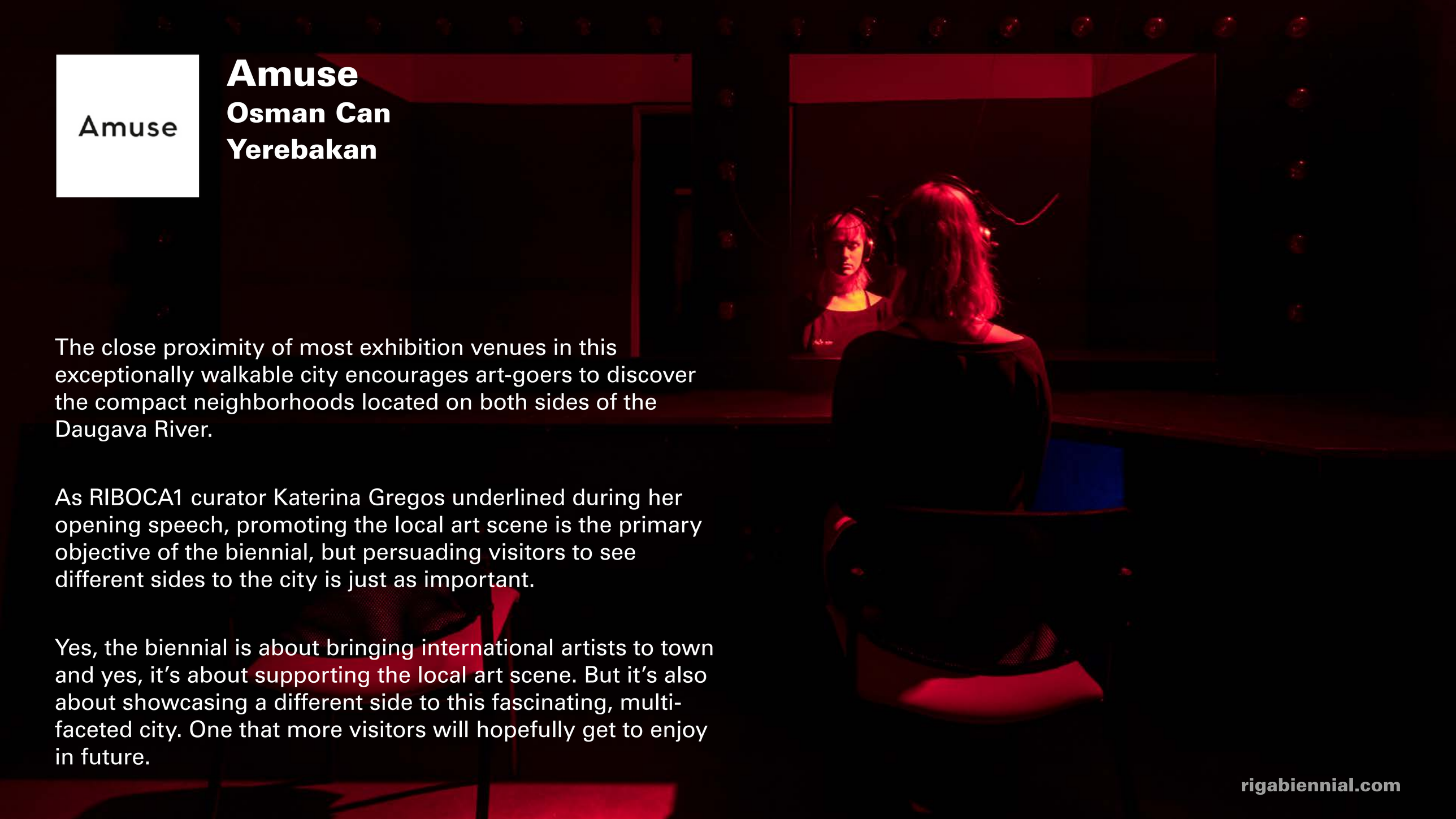
Amuse

Osman Can Yerebakan



The close proximity of most exhibition venues in this exceptionally walkable city encourages art-goers to discover the compact neighborhoods located on both sides of the Daugava River.

As RIBOCA1 curator Katerina Gregos underlined during her opening speech, promoting the local art scene is the primary objective of the biennial, but persuading visitors to see different sides to the city is just as important.

Yes, the biennial is about bringing international artists to town and yes, it’s about supporting the local art scene. But it’s also about showcasing a different side to this fascinating, multi-faceted city. One that more visitors will hopefully get to enjoy in future.



Art Radar

…Gregos is widely known for her intellectual rigour and for dedicating shows to emerging artists and contemporary issues.

Berlin Art Link

Grace Franck

Spread throughout eight venues and featuring more than 90 artists, the first edition of the Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA1) is a curatorial feat.

Athens Voice

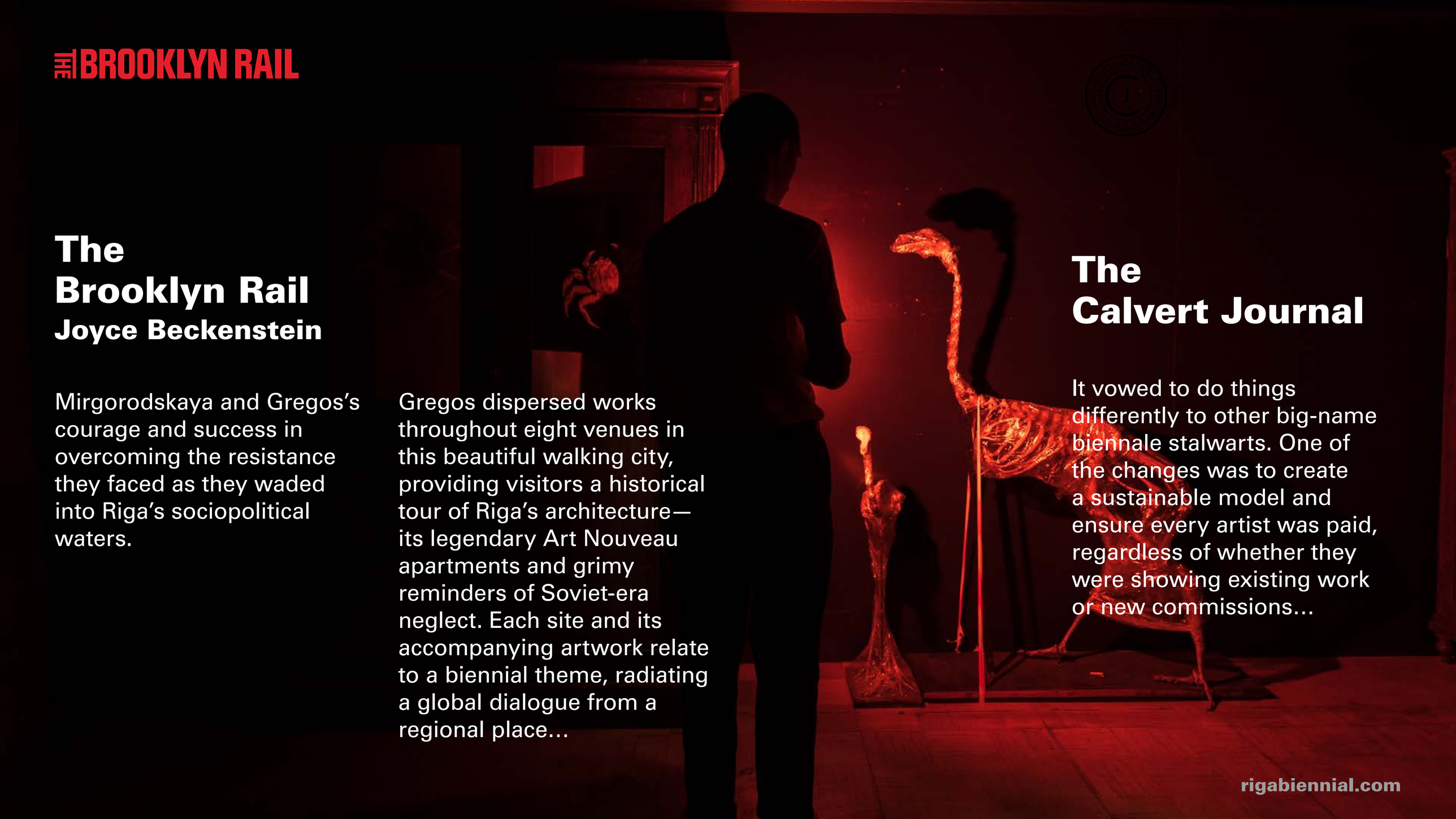
Foivos Sakalis



Although the issues introduced by Katerina Gregou are of great importance, the exhibition avoids grandeur statements. Humor characterises many of the works.

An interesting element of the Biennale is the impressive number of commissions for the creation of new works, to about forty artists. At the same time, the choice of exhibition venues is interesting. Paintings, photographs, videos, installations, and performances, indoors and outdoors, weave the narrative. The curator made sure to use spaces in many different parts of the beautiful city with the imaginative and elegant art nouveau buildings and wooden rustic influences, inviting you to explore Riga and explore the connections between art and history.

Having seen the exhibition, one understands Katerina Grego's answer to the question «Why another biennale in one more city»: Why is there always room and need for interesting art, dialogue and experiences?



THE BROOKLYN RAIL

The Brooklyn Rail
Joyce Beckenstein

Mirgorodskaya and Gregos's courage and success in overcoming the resistance they faced as they waded into Riga's sociopolitical waters.

Gregos dispersed works throughout eight venues in this beautiful walking city, providing visitors a historical tour of Riga's architecture—its legendary Art Nouveau apartments and grimy reminders of Soviet-era neglect. Each site and its accompanying artwork relate to a biennial theme, radiating a global dialogue from a regional place…

The Calvert Journal

It vowed to do things differently to other big-name biennale stalwarts. One of the changes was to create a sustainable model and ensure every artist was paid, regardless of whether they were showing existing work or new commissions…

rigabiennial.com

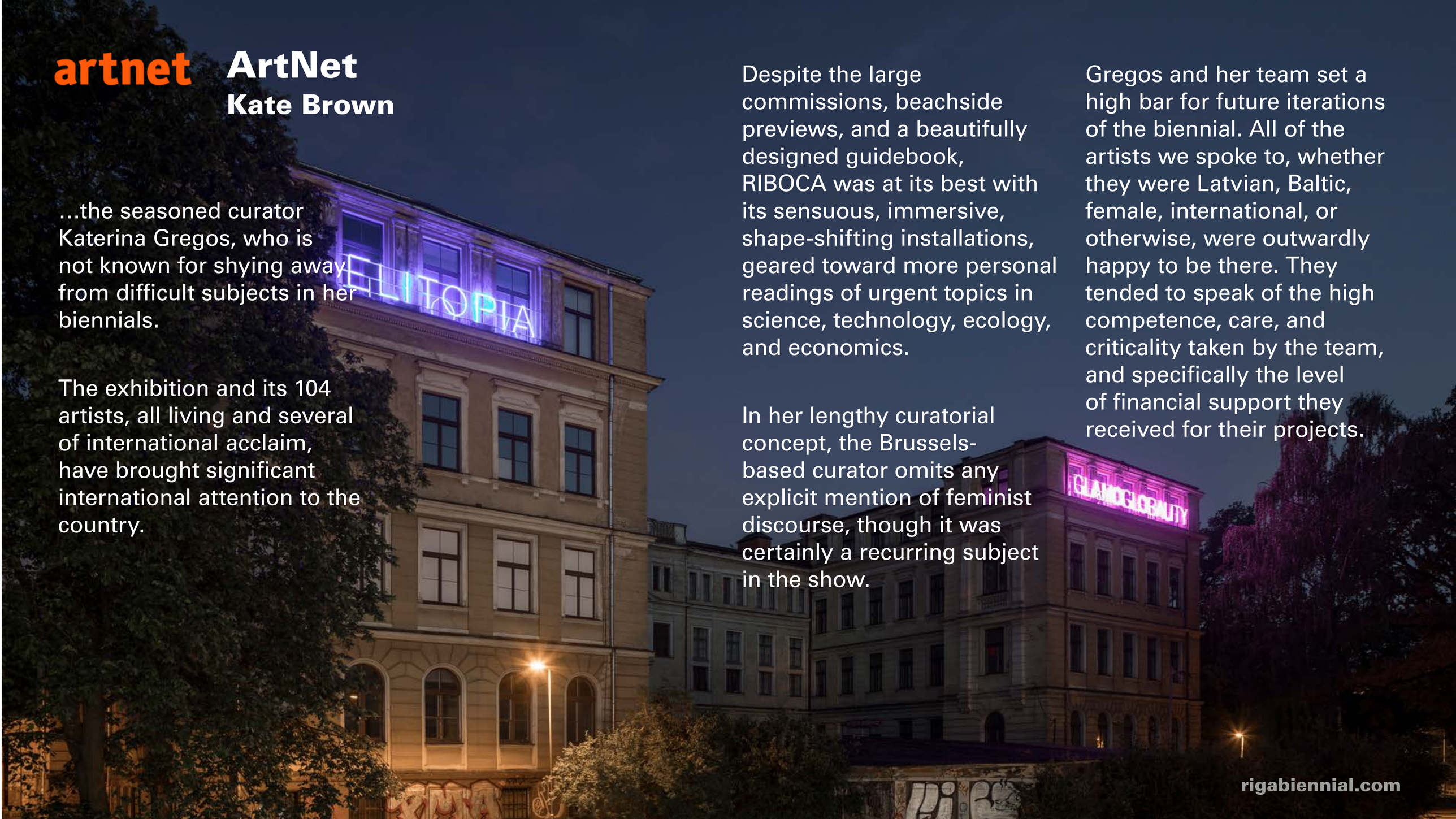
ELEPHANT

Elephant

The sheer magnitude of the programme is palpable as soon as you enter the Former Faculty of Biology at the University of Latvia…The selection process demonstrates an intelligent reading of the space's science and technology legacy and great pains have been taken to embed works that correlate with the decrepit wood-panelled corridors, defunct equipment displays and abandoned laboratories.

…This immersion is as much a testament to the film as it is to the incredibly attentive installation process (the exceptional sound and epic proportions of the screen truly envelop you), which is of an impressively high standard throughout the biennial.

It's (Marco Montiel-Soto's installation) an exceptional feat that exemplifies the ambitions of this biennial, which manages to weave common threads without seeming heavy-handed, with a deliberate focus on immersive film and installation.



artnet **ArtNet**

Kate Brown

…the seasoned curator Katerina Gregos, who is not known for shying away from difficult subjects in her biennials.

The exhibition and its 104 artists, all living and several of international acclaim, have brought significant international attention to the country.

Despite the large commissions, beachside previews, and a beautifully designed guidebook, RIBOCA was at its best with its sensuous, immersive, shape-shifting installations, geared toward more personal readings of urgent topics in science, technology, ecology, and economics.

In her lengthy curatorial concept, the Brussels-based curator omits any explicit mention of feminist discourse, though it was certainly a recurring subject in the show.

Gregos and her team set a high bar for future iterations of the biennial. All of the artists we spoke to, whether they were Latvian, Baltic, female, international, or otherwise, were outwardly happy to be there. They tended to speak of the high competence, care, and criticality taken by the team, and specifically the level of financial support they received for their projects.

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Kunstkritikk

Kunstkritikk
Jacquelyn Davis



For the first Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art, curator Katarina Gregos has chosen to view Latvia as ‘the center of the world,’ where other regions and nationalities become satellites. This is refreshing, for the Baltics have previously been considered to have a peripheral status.

The former Bolshevichka Textile Factory provides strong experimental works by Latvian artists…

Many works promote introspection, as well as welcoming narratives and conversations which may lead to sound collaborations and better ideas. With so many new commissions, this biennial cannot avoid being both a response to the times and an opportunity for artists to reveal astute work under Grego’s thematic conditions – ranging from the site-specific to the experimental.”

DAMN°

DAMN Magazine

Jurriaan Benschop

...The Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art...seems to contribute to the artistic self-awareness of Latvia and the wider Baltic region. After being considered by the outside world mainly as a post-Soviet state, it offers the capital city a chance to reinvent itself and recover from its past.

Fr.de

Van Sandea Danicke

And while the world may not have been waiting for another art biennial, one must appreciate that this Riga edition is worthwhile.

Rarely has a trip to Riga paid off as it has these weeks.



OCULA

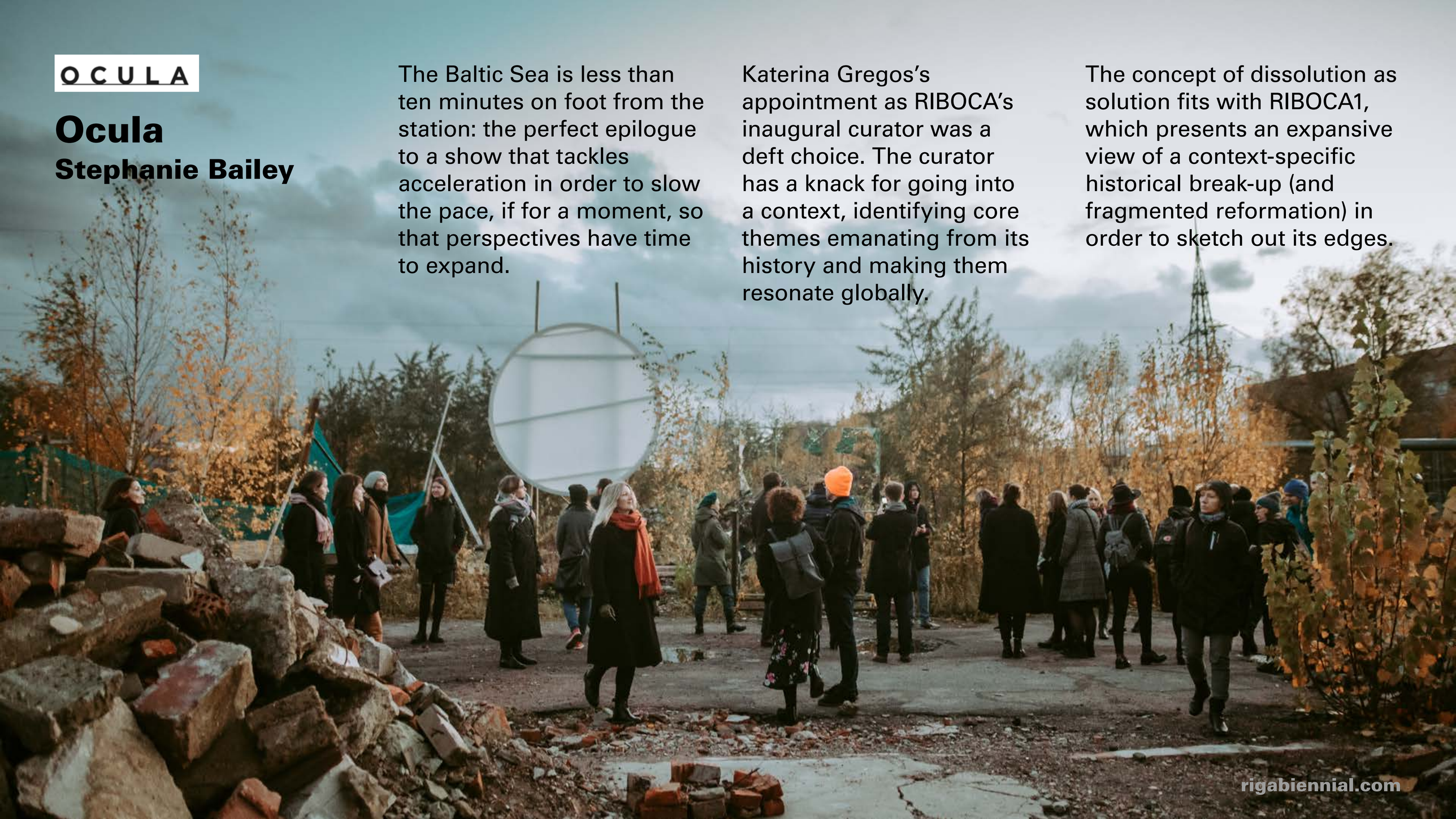
Ocula

Stephanie Bailey

The Baltic Sea is less than ten minutes on foot from the station: the perfect epilogue to a show that tackles acceleration in order to slow the pace, if for a moment, so that perspectives have time to expand.

Katerina Gregos's appointment as RIBOCA's inaugural curator was a deft choice. The curator has a knack for going into a context, identifying core themes emanating from its history and making them resonate globally.

The concept of dissolution as solution fits with RIBOCA1, which presents an expansive view of a context-specific historical break-up (and fragmented reformation) in order to sketch out its edges.



ARTERRITORY
Baltic, Russian and
Scandinavian Art Territory

Art Territory

This is not only a potentially powerful project in its cultural factor, but also a “meeting point” for the most diverse layers and “tribes” of modern society; here are both the students eager for new information and the careful and cautious millionaires, intellectuals critical of everything, and then there are the collectors trying to catch the ‘nerve of time”.



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